

co-chairs: Representative Liz Linehan and Senator Saud Anwar

Good Day Chairs, representatives, and members of the committee,

My name is Mr. Jacob Fricker. I teach various courses in the biological sciences at Regional School District #9 (Joel Barlow High School) in Redding, Ct to grades 10 and 12. I am writing you today concerning [**SB 2 An Act Concerning Social Equity And The Health, Safety And Education Of Children**](#)

Virtual teaching is ineffective. It can never replace in-person instruction. Having uniform standards is desirable, to some degree, and would attempt to promote equity, the bill implies virtual learning settings will not be limited to emergencies like a pandemic. Virtual instruction needs to end as soon as is safe. Our children are falling behind academically and socially. Teaching virtually is crushing teachers and is driving colleagues out from the profession. The idea that hybrid learning modalities and pure virtual learning may continue beyond acceptable vaccination rates will cause more teachers to quit. Our students are struggling with emotional wellbeing let alone learning that is greatly caused by the pandemic and required distance learning. In my school district students have expressed great joy in going to school when other students are present. They also express great sorrow and reluctance to attend virtually. Except during tests.

All teaching decisions should involve discussions with active teachers. Very much how medical decisions should be made in consultation with medical practitioners and issues with your car should be made in consultation with a mechanic. Any decisions made regarding education should be made in serious consultation, at every point, with practicing teachers.

There are no experts in virtual teaching., THis is because all people know that virtual learning is a cheap imitation of actual instruction and learning. It is an ineffective method of creating a learning environment. We are as close to experts as we have the most experience. It doesn't work. Remove the ideas of the disequity access to technology, high speed internet, and technological fluency brings and you still have a teaching and learning modality that will only work for a small subset of the population. It's simply an ineffective manner of learning. Learning is, at its core, social. Virtual is not social. It's an ineffective stop gap to get us through a pandemic and needs to be addressed as such. PD, no matter how good, can't make virtual learning an adequate substitute for in-person learning.

Speak to teachers, speak to students, speak to parents. Everyone I've talked to hates virtual teaching and virtual learning from an education standpoint. We should not be permitting virtual learning as an ongoing method of instruction. Virtual learning is not an adequate substitute for in-person learning.